

## ***Be An Informed Pet Owner***

How do you know who is performing any particular treatment for your pet? Ask the veterinarian who in their practice normally provides the types of treatments your pet will be receiving. Veterinarians should be happy to discuss with you all aspects of your pet's care.

To fully participate in your pet's care, you should familiarize yourself with the staff members at your pet's veterinary facility. Ask to meet the RVTs and UAs who work there. Staff members like to know the owners of the pets they treat.

Remember, it is always the veterinarian's responsibility to determine the nature of the problem (diagnose), to prescribe medication and the course of treatment, and to perform surgery.

It is also the veterinarian who must determine which member of the team is most appropriate to perform particular tasks within the confines of the law. RVTs and UAs assist the veterinarian in providing high quality medical care in an efficient and cost effective manner.

## ***Problems?***

If you have any questions regarding your pet's care you should first discuss your concerns with the veterinarian. If your concerns remain, the California Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) and its Registered Veterinary Technician Committee are available to serve you. As a division of the State of California Department of Consumer Affairs, it is the mission of the VMB to protect consumers and their animals.

### **The Veterinary Medical Board**

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*Visit our web site at  
[www.vmb.ca.gov](http://www.vmb.ca.gov)  
for up-to-date information.*

## ***The Veterinary Healthcare Team***



California Veterinary Medical Board  
Registered Veterinary Technician Committee

# Who Takes Care of My Pet?

Your pet becomes ill and needs to be admitted to a veterinary hospital. Who will be caring for your pet while he or she is there? Certainly, the veterinarian will be the one who diagnoses the problems and prescribes the treatments. If surgery is required, the veterinarian will be the one to perform it. But are you aware of the other members of the veterinary health care team who participate in your pet's care?

## Registered Veterinary Technicians (RVTs)

RVTs are skilled professionals who complete a prescribed education and training program and pass a certification examination. Veterinarians may delegate certain tasks to RVTs.

Under the Direct Supervision of the veterinarian (meaning the veterinarian and RVT are at the same location and the veterinarian is readily available) an RVT may:

1. Administer anesthetic
2. Suture a skin incision
3. Extract teeth
4. Apply a splint or cast

Under Indirect Supervision (meaning the veterinarian is not present at the location where the tasks are being performed but has



left specific instructions) an RVT may:

1. Operate radiographic equipment.
2. Perform certain emergency life-saving procedures such as apply tourniquets or temporary splints, perform external cardiac resuscitation, assist breathing except by surgery.
3. Administer medications; apply or change bandages.
4. Assist in surgery; draw blood; run lab tests.

5. Any other tasks not reserved for a veterinarian.

RVTs may provide prescribed treatment in the veterinary hospital, or in other settings such as the client's home.

## Unregistered Assistants (UAs)

An unregistered assistant can be anyone who is not a veterinarian or RVT. Some UAs are very skilled assistants. Some are new to the field of animal health care.

Unregistered Assistants may not perform any of the tasks reserved for veterinarians or RVTs. Depending on the UA's level of skill, the veterinarian may allow a UA to administer medication, or perform any other task not reserved for veterinarians or RVTs. UAs may operate radiographic equipment under the direct supervision of a veterinarian or RVT.